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TAGS: [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [MOPS](#)
SUBJECT: PRT MAYSAN HITS THE STREETS OF AMARAH

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Dan Foote for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C/REL MCFI) Summary: PRT leader (TL) made a watershed visit to Amarah, the capital of Maysan province, on June 27 via U.S. military convoy. Amarah was calm, with an impressive array of Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) elements visible on the streets. City residents were circulating normally on foot, on bicycle, and in vehicles; shops, restaurants, and businesses were open. PRT last set foot in Amarah in April 2007, prior to the province's transition from Multi-National Division Southeast (MND-SE) to Iraqi control. End Summary.

¶2. (C/REL MCFI) TL was treated to a windshield tour of several Amarah neighborhoods, under the guidance of Deputy Commanding General (Operations) (DCG-O) Jeff Buchanan, Multi-National Division Central (MND-C). Poverty was notable in many; large amounts of trash and debris were visible in all. IP were out in force, with a presence at most major intersections. The IA and IP were manning vehicle checkpoints throughout the city, and tanks guarded one of the main bridges across the Tigris. TL noted open restaurants, kiosks, fruit and vegetable stands, small convenience stores, and construction trade material vendors. There was no evidence of negative reactions to the Coalition Forces (CF) presence, but a sense of curiosity. While residents did not approach CF or TL, many returned greetings. The PRT's local employee in Maysan reports that all the buildings formerly occupied by militia elements have been occupied by the IA/IP and are currently used as offices and barracks. Sadrist and religious posters and propaganda have been removed in the city; TL saw no evidence of any such propaganda in Amarah.

¶3. (C/REL MCFI) The Iraqi caretaker of the Amarah British War Cemetery, where British soldiers from WWI are buried, welcomed the contingent into the cemetery grounds, which are fairly well kept and extensive. The caretaker commented that he has continued his duties despite the fact that he has not received payment from the British military since February, 2006, and asked for assistance in restarting his salary payments. He also made disparaging comments about the governor.

¶4. (C/REL MCFI) Comment: The PRT's return to Amarah presents an important step in the process of U.S. engagement with Maysanis, and significantly increases the team's ability to affect provincial reconstruction in this strategic province. The support of MND-C and DCG-O Buchanan, and the collaboration and outreach by Maysan-stakeholder U.S. military elements, have been critical in creating this historic opportunity for the PRT. The team will continue regular travel into the province in coming days and weeks as we ramp up efforts to assess, plan, and implement the mission in Maysan. End Comment.
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